generation Advanced Turbo Prop. aircrafts (ATP) and other matters;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard.

(c) whether any agreement has since been signed between British Aerospace and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR) : (a) to (d) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited had received a proposal from British Aerospace for manufacture of the Advanced Turbo Prop. Aircraft in HAL. After preliminary discussions, the British Aerospace have been asked to revise their proposals to make the same economically viable.

Selling of Obsolete Defence Equipment

1235. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 3149 given in the Rajya Sabha on 19th December, 1991 and state the procedure adopted for selling old obsolete defence equipments and the manner in which Government propose to ensure that these sold out defence weapons do not pass into countries where low intensity conflicts are waging?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): Old obsolete defence equipments which are considered viable for sale to foreign buyers is proposed to be sold through the Projects & Equipment Corporation of India (PEC). PEC being an export house follows normal commercial procedures in such sales and in addition will observe the prescribed end-user conditionalities to guard against the items sold reaching unintended destinations.

Light Combat Aircraft

1236. SHRI SURESH KALMADI:

SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) by when the first aircraft of the light combat aircraft (LCA) project is expected to be ready to fly;

(b) whether Government propose to look forward for participants in the project in view of the massive cost of Rs. 20,000 crores in it; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The first Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) is expected to be ready for flight in 1996-97.

(b) and (c) Proposals for participation in the development of the LCA as and when received would be given favourable consideration. However, its cost is not Rs. 20,000 crores as stated in the text of the question, but is much lower.

Indian Interest in Soviet Aircraft Carrier 'VARYAG'

1237. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reports which appeared in the 'Economic Times', New Delhi dated the 11th February, 1992 to the effect that India and China are interested in buying the former So-

viet aircraft supercarrier 'Varyag' as alleged by Western Naval Intelligence sources;

(b) what is the estimated cost of this ship;

(c) whether any negotiations have been held with the present Russian Government in this matter; if so, their reaction thereto;

(d) whether Government's attention has also been invited to the news item captioned "Ukraine sold off Cruiser to India" appearing in the Hindustan Times', New Delhi, dated 19th February, 1992; and

(e) if so, the fact of the matter and his reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) The Government have seen the news items which appeared in the Economic Times/Hindustan Times regarding the possible sale of an Aircraft Carrier/Cruisers by Ukraine to the Indian Navy. These reports are without any basis.

"Dry Dock" Project at Bombay

1238. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to abandon the dry dock project that was coming up in Bombay after spending crores of rupees thereon;

(b) If so, the reasons therefor;

(c) in what manner it is proposed to utilise the Rs. 15 crore first stage of the project already completed; and

(d) what alternative arrangements for the docking of the Naval fleet for repairs and re-fitting have been made or likely to be made?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) A final decision has not so far been taken to abandon the Project.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

"Seabird" Naval Base at Karwar

1239. SHRI J. P. JAVALI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry of Environment has given conditional clearance to the Seabird naval base at Karwar;

(b) whether it is also a fact that work on this project was scheduled to begin in 1988 for completion in 1996; and

(c) if so, the reasons for the delay and what is the revised programme for the completion of the project?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) Phase I of the Project was envisaged for completion in a 10 year time-frame commencing 1985 subject to the completion of the preliminary studies at the site, preparation of the Master Plan/Detailed Project Report, availability of land, grant of environmental clearance and Government sanction of the firm cost estimates of Phase I of the Project. More time than anticipated has been/is being taken in cmpleting the above activities. The Phase I works are not expected to take about 8—10 years for completion after sanction subject to the availability of funds.